A GUIDE FOR

Evaluating the Impact of Professional Learning

Professional Learning can be presented and sustained in multiple ways. It goes beyond workshops where information is presented to a group of participants. A combination of professional learning options may include study groups; book study groups; classroom demonstration lessons; professional learning communities; video-taped lessons viewed, discussed and analyzed in teams later; one-on-one support from instructional coaches; peer coaching; peer observations; and many other venues. Ultimately, professional learning should improve instructional practices and lead to critical outcomes of improved student learning.

Participants' Initial Evidence of Learning

1. Collect evidence with a short, focused questionnaire to determine participants' initial reflections. **(Tool # 1)**

2. Follow up within the first six weeks by gathering evidence from participants in a variety of ways. One way to collect the information is another short, focused questionnaire to determine if participants are actually using the skills and knowledge they acquired, what challenges (and successes) they are encountering, and what positive impact they have seen on students. **(Tool # 2)**

Determine in advance who will analyze the results and plan how the results will be shared and used.

Participants' Continuous Use of Professional Learning

1. Support participants' during the initial implementation of professional learning. One-on-one guidance from instructional leaders, literacy coaches, insights from video models and short collaborative meetings during initial implementation will help participants over the hurdles and help keep them from abandoning skills and strategies acquired in professional learning.

2. Facilitate on-going, embedded professional learning so teachers at different stages of use can continue to learn by fostering teacher collaboration <u>as they implement</u> knowledge, skills and strategies from their professional learning opportunities.

Example opportunities:

- o model or demonstration lessons (demos) in classrooms

- o peer observations of implementation of knowledge or skills acquired from professional learning

- o peer coaching and mentoring for new teachers (0-5 years) by more experienced teachers

- o feedback from peers after demos, peer observations, videos of lessons focused on professional learning and next steps

- o feedback from peers as they implement the knowledge or skills acquired in professional learning (focus should be on what they have learned, how they have solved problems they encountered, or practices that work)

- o grade-level, department and cross-grade meetings focused on instructional strategies, assessment (formative and/or summative) results that reflect the impact on student learning

- o faculty meeting time focused on student learning resulting from implementation of professional learning

- o study groups that focus on extending the impact of professional learning and helping participants learn how to effectively implement what they learned in their own classrooms

- o one-to-one support from a literacy coach or instructional coach

- o application of protocols to focus discussion and inform next instructional steps

3. Gather evidence from a variety of sources about the quality of participants' use of new knowledge and skills and the difference in their practices.

Some examples:

- o participants' reflection and feedback **(Tool # 3)**

- o video-taped lessons

- o direct observations

- o interviews with participants

- o participants' on-going analysis of impact on student learning

- o minutes, reflections or records from collaboration meetings

- o implementation logs

4. Use information gathered from on-going formative assessments to make relevant revisions and support participants as they implement.

Determine in advance:

- **who will gather the results and how much they should gather**

- **what the indicators of successful implementation will be**

- **how frequently the results will be gathered**

- **who will analyze the results**

- **how the results will be shared**

- **how the results will be used to impact future instruction and student learning**

<u>Impact on Student Learning</u>

Use multiple ways to collect a variety of evidence about student learning outcomes from such data-sources as:

1. pre- and post- instruction assessment data

2. formative and summative assessments

3. student interviews, conferencing or questionnaires

4. performance tasks

5. group tasks or actions

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- **how the results will be used to impact future instruction and student learning**

For more detailed guidance, consult Thomas Guskey's book, *Evaluating Professional Development (2000),* which served as a reference for some elements of this document.

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